

GIPSAnews

THE NEW SLETTER OF THE GRAIN INSPECTION, PACKERS AN

JULY 2015

IT Investments — Capitol Planning and Investment Controls (CPIC)

Daniel Knight, Washington, D.C.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- ♦ FGIS Matters...!
- ♦ Names in the News
- ♦ Shout-Out!
- ♦ National Grain Center Report
- ♦ FEVS Update
- ♦ GIPSA town Hall Recap
- ♦ Gold Standard Award

In addition to Information Technology (IT) support, GIPSA's Information Technology Services is required to track all IT spending and report to Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The process for reporting this information is Capitol Planning and Investment Controls (CPIC). CPIC is mandated by the Clinger-Cohen Act of 1996 and requires Federal agencies to focus more on the results achieved through IT investments while streamlining the Federal IT procurement process. The CPIC process, as implemented at USDA in 1997, is a structured, integrated approach to management.



ing IT investments. It ensures that all IT investments align with the USDA mission strategic goals and business needs while minimizing risks and maximizing returns throughout the investment's lifecycle.

GIPSA's IT staff manages two non-major IT investments: FGISonLine and GIPSA Enterprise Infrastructure. GIPSA's IT staff also has four child investments (managed by the Department), which are Enterprise Shared Services investments, USDA Enterprise Data Center & Hosting Shared Services (EDC); USDA Enterprise Telecommunication Shared Services (TSS); USDA Enterprise End User Shared Service (EUSS); and USDA Enterprise Messaging Systems-Cloud Services (EMS-CS).

All investments must have a Project Management Plan (PMP) and Operational Analysis (OA). An OA is part of the CPIC process and a formal review of an investment's performance that formally assesses how well an investment is meeting strategic and business objectives, financial goals, customer needs, system performance goals, and how well it is performing within baseline cost and performance goals.

The investments have costs that reflects PY-Prior Year, CY-Current Year and BY-Budget Year. The investments are monitored by Program and Project Managers (PM) that must have appropriate certification (FAC-PPM/PMP) or recent PM experience. We are working to ensure that GIPSA CPIC team has the proper training and certifications as we proceed with updates to our IT investments in the new AgMax Portfolio Management Tool formally known as the Electronic Capital Planning and Investment Control (eCPIC) System.

PAGE 2 GIPSA news July 2015

FGIS Matters....!

Randall Jones, Washington, D.C.

Reauthorization. We have very good news to report with both the House and the Senate taking action to reauthorize the USGSA.

On April 30, the House Committee on Agriculture passed, by voice vote, H.R. 2088 - To amend the United States Grain Standards Act to improve inspection services performed at export elevators at export port locations, to reauthorize certain authorities of the Secretary of Agriculture under such Act, and for other purposes – and recommended its adoption by the Full House. This legislation will reauthorize the five expiring provisions of the U.S. Grain Standards Act for five years (to Sept. 30, 2020).

On May 21, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry passed Federal Grain Inspection reauthorization passed the U.S. Grains Standards Act Reauthorization Act of 2015, which authorizes the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Federal Grain Inspection Service to establish marketing standards and conduct inspection and weighing for a variety of grains and oilseeds.



"This bipartisan legislation provides much needed transparency and predictability throughout the federal grain inspection system to prevent future export disruptions – like we saw at the Port of Vancouver last summer," said Chairman Pat Roberts. "The United States is the world leader in agricultural exports," said Ranking Member Debbie Stabenow. "Whether its Michigan soybeans or Kansas wheat, our nation's farmers grow the highest quality products available. That's why we must have a robust federal grain inspection system to back the integrity of our exports." Introduced by Roberts and Stabenow, this legislation reauthorizes provisions of the U.S. Grain Standards Act until September 30, 2020. It reaffirms the role of the federal inspection service and requires the Secretary of Agriculture to immediately take action to maintain export inspection and notify Congress in the case of a disruption. Additionally, it creates a transparent certification process for delegated state agencies inspecting exports. The legislation also requires the Secretary of Agriculture to report to Congress on the 2014 disruption in grain export inspections, as well as additional measures.

Next steps. Both the House and the Senate will need to take further action on the pending legislation and, while the schedule is not exactly clear, we anticipate that action could possibly take place in June.

Grain Exporter Meeting in NOLA. On May 13, the FGIS management team met with the North American Export Association. This annual meeting is a great opportunity to discuss a host of issues such as service delivery, moisture meters, phytosanitary issues, and safety and health.

Canadian Grain Commission. April 27-29, FGIS met with CGC and discussed topics covering grain standards, safety practices, procedures, and lab design. FGIS and CGC share many of the same interests and we plan to collaborate with CGC on future projects to maximize the resources of both organizations.

AAGIWA Meeting. On May 4 and 5, FGIS Management participated in the annual meeting of the American Association of Grain Inspection and Weighing Agency. AAGIWA represents the Official Agencies that conduct domestic grain inspections on behalf of FGIS and play a critical role in the Official Grain Inspection System.

Quality Committee. During the past month, the FGIS Quality Committee was established and is comprised the Deputy Directors, Bar Chairman, and Chief Scientist with the Quality Assurance and Compliance Division Director who serves as the facilitator. The primary mission of the Quality Committee is to review and provide guidance regarding quality assurance policy issues.

Annual Report. The annual report was provided to Congress and has been posted to the GIPSA website at http://www.gipsa.usda.gov/fgis/public_reports.aspx

Until next time, keep up the good work and stay safe!

PAGE 3 GIPSA news July 2015

Names in the News

New Hire



On April 20, 2015, **Russell Davis** began working as an FGIS Quality Assurance and Compliance Division compliance officer in Washington, D.C.. His primary role will be to conduct investigations of alleged violations to the USGSA and AMA and alleged employee misconduct. His first day was yesterday, April 20th.

Russ joins USDA from the US Department of State, Bureau of Diplomatic Security where his last assignment was at the US Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. Russ is a US veteran, completing two tours in Iraq with the USAF. He is currently working on earning a Master's Degree in Natural Resources at Virginia Tech University. He earned his Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice/ Homeland Security from Excelsior College in Albany, NY. Russ and his family have relocated to the Winchester, VA area from Canton, GA.

Dexter Coburn is the new Mediator for the GIPSA Civil Rights office. Dexter has served in the United States Air Force, and retired after 26 years of service. As a Master Sergeant he served as a Director of Military Equal Opportunity (Japan & Iraq), Commandant of the Special Ops Commando Pride Airman Center, and Additional Duty First Sergeant. He attended college at the University of Phoenix, for his Bachelors of Business Management, and Liberty University for his Master in Management and Leadership. Dexter currently resides on Joint Base Anacostia Bolling with his wife, Angela and their three children, ages 14, 12, & 11. He enjoys studying the bible, and spending time with his family while traveling, biking, hiking, or watching movies.





Adele Jackson-Croal was selected as Administrative Support Assistant with Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration (GIPSA) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on April 5, 2015.

Before joining GIPSA, Mrs. Jackson-Croal served as Substitute Teacher with Department of Defense Educational Activity. Prior to her tenure at the Department of Defense she served as the Lead Logistics Analyst for BAE Systems, Inc., at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. She began her Federal career in The United States Army serving over 20 years as a Senior Logistician/EEO Manager. She has served two tours of

combat duty in The Gulf and Iraq/Afghanistan Wars. Prior to arriving in the Washington, D.C. area, she served as an Equal Opportunity Advisor for over seven years, prior to retiring in the Atlanta, Georgia suburbs.

Mrs. Jackson-Croal has earned a MBA with a minor in HR and Masters of Ed., both with honors, from Strayer University and currently a candidate for her Educational Doctorate with Phoenix University. She is married to James and has two sons: David & James II.

Adele will be the key point of contact for administrative support of Field Management, Quality Assurance & Compliance, and Initiatives & International Affairs' Directors.

New Position

Robert Arnhold (RA) was selected as the new Assistant Field Office Manager of the Portland Field Office. Before joining the FGIS team in April, 2014, as a Supervisor, RA had many years of prior experience working for the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA). He began his career with WSDA in 1978 filling many different roles including: Agricultural Commodities Grader, Supervisor, QAS, Scale Specialist, Equipment Specialist and Acting Regional Manager. RA brings an abundance of knowledge and is a very hardworking, dedicated employee who we're excited to have as a part of our team.



PAGE 4 GIPSA NEWS July 2015

Names in the News (cont.)

New Position



George Banks Jr., was selected as the new Quality Assurance Specialist for the League City Field Office starting May 31, 2015. Banks started his federal government career working for APHIS (Animal Plant Health Inspection Services) in 2006 as a Plant Protection Quarantine Technician. He started with FGIS in the New Orleans Field Office in August 2010 as an Agriculture Commodity Technician, and was promoted to Agriculture Commodity Grader in 2011. Banks graduated from Louisiana State University with a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Education with a minor in Human Resources and Workforce Development. George Banks completed the New Leadership Program in February 2015.

Dr. Timothy Norden was Selected as GIPSA's Chief Scientist. Dr. Norden joined GIPSA in 1991 as a Chemist and Leader of the Trace Analysis Lab in the Federal Grain Inspection Service's Technology and Science Division, Research and Development Branch. In 2001, he became Chief of the Analytical, Reference, and Testing Services Branch, which added leadership responsibilities for the GIPSA moisture, protein, and oil Reference Laboratories, the Commodities Testing Laboratory, and the Mycotoxin Test Kit Evaluation Program. From 2005 – 2011, before becoming Chief of the Analytical Chemistry Branch, Dr. Norden was Research Leader for the Analytical Methods Development Group with responsibilities for the Trace Analysis, Wheat Functionality, and Biotechnology programs. Over the past 24 years, Dr. Norden has developed or led in the development of numerous analytical methods for grains and processed-grain commodities. Target analytes have included pesticide residues, mycotoxins, heavy metals, vitamins, amino acids, fatty acids, and genetically engineered traits.



40 years of Service

Thomas Reagan, Beaumont, Texas, Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate and pin for 40 years of Service with the United States Government.

Richard Uehara, New Orleans, Louisiana, Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate and pin for 40 years of Service with the United States Government.

George Banks, New Orleans, Quality Assurance Specialist was presented with a certificate and pin for 40 years of Service with the United States Government.

Myron Hall, League City, Texas, Supervisory Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate and pin for 40 years of Service with the United States Government.

PAGE 5 GIPSA news July 2015

Names in the News (cont.)

35 years



Mary (Irene) Omade, Washington, D.C., Management Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 35 years of Service with the United States Government.

30 years



Catherine Grasso, Washington, D.C., Program Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 30 years of Service with the United States Government.



Raymond (Dexter) Thomas, Washington, D.C., Supervisory Regulatory Analyst was presented with a certificate and pin for 30 years of Service with the United States Government.

25 years of Service

Sandra Metheny Stuttgart, Arkansas, Field Office Manager was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Margaret Glavi, Toledo, Ohio, Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Susan Fall, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Grain Marketing Specialist was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Roderick Prather, Lubbock, Texas, Resident Agent was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Edward Stallman, Grand Forks, North Dakota, Field Office Manager was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Stuart Frank, Des Moines, Iowa, Regional Director was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

PAGE 6 GIPSA news July 2015

Names in the News (cont.)

25 years of Service

Deborah Edwards, League City, Texas, Supervisory Certification Assistant was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

Susan Martin, Washington, D.C., Secretary was presented with a certificate and pin for 25 years of Service with the United States Government.

20 years of Service

Clarence Abrom, League City, Texas, Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate for 20 years of Service with the United States Government.

Dana Mitchell, New Orleans, Louisiana, Certification Assistant was presented with a certificate for 20 years of Service with the United States Government.

15 years of Service



Steven (Brett) Offutt, Washington, D.C., Director was presented with a certificate for 15 years of Service with the United States Government.

Haijiang Wang, Washington, D.C., Economist was presented with a certificate 15 years of Service with the United States Government.

Bernice Moreland, New Orleans, Agricultural Commodity Grader was presented with a certificate for 15 years of Service with the United States Government.

Adam Fast, Des Moines, Iowa, Senior Auditor was presented with a certificate for 15 years of Service with the United States Government.

10 years of Service

Ilia Gautier Nagle, Wichita, Kansas, Marketing Inspector was presented with a certificate for 10 years of Service with the United States Government.

PAGE 7 GIPSA news July 2015

GIPSA Town Hall Employee Engagement Recap



First, I want to send a special "Shout Out" to all of our GIPSA folks who took time out of your work schedule to participate in GIPSA's April 21 Town Hall meeting. As you have been reminded so many times by GIPSA leadership, your participation in all employee engagement events is absolutely vital to making USDA, and GIPSA specifically, a premier employer where our employees' views, opinions, and concerns are valued by supervisors, managers, and agency executives. To borrow from FGIS Deputy Administrator Randall Jones' monthly newsletter article – your opinion DOES matter. GIPSA's Town Hall meetings provide GIPSA leadership and employees with insight to those topics that matter most.

Prior to every Town Hall, we reach out to you to provide us with topics that you would like discussed or covered during the live event. Of course, some topics like telework, raises, promotions, and training opportunities are perennial favorites

among some of you, but that does not diminish their importance at all. Many GIPSA employees are front line field employees who may work long hours for FGIS loading grain on ships for export, or they may be Resident Agents who work for P&SP out of their homes and travel often as part of their job. Often, these employees may not get the face-to-face interaction with supervisors and managers that many of us take for granted because we work in Headquarters, the National Grain Center, or one of the many regional and field offices where interaction between supervisors and employees is constant.

We want all employees to have more interaction with their supervisors and managers regardless of their duty station and we need your help and your suggestions about how we can communicate more effectively with all GIPSA employees on issues that matter most to you. The issues that were addressed by GIPSA management during the recent Town Hall came directly from you. For those of you who were unable to participate, topics covered included employee awards, reauthorization of the U.S. Grain Standards Act, employee engagement, strategic planning, and training opportunities. More specifically, there were questions about employee retention, loss of GIPSA's knowledge base, career development, and employee promotion potential, among others.

This year, the Town Hall lasted for almost 2 hours, providing for more question and answer time for managers after their presentations. Almost 50 percent of participants viewed the Town Hall as a live webcast in video, about 15 percent attended in person, and approximately 35 percent, or 121 of you joined in by phone. If you did not have the opportunity to participate in the Town Hall and would like to view the webcast, it can be accessed at http://www.screencast.com/t/IOHYThHd9A. Finally, for those of you who would like to provide us your comments and/or criticisms on the Town Hall, you have until close of business May 29 to complete the post Town Hall survey at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015GIPSATownHall.

2015 GIPSA All-Employee Town Hall Meeting Survey

2015 Town Hall Follow up Survey

Thank you for participating in GIPSA's recent All-Employee Town Hall Meeting. Please complete the following questions to help us improve the next meeting. Your feedback is extremely important to us.

- * 1. How did you participate in the meeting?
- Webcast Recording
- In-Person
- Live Webcast in Video Teleconference (VTC) in a conference room
- O Phone only



GIPSA Idea Hotline

GIPSA Idea Hotline is open for business.
Please send your suggestions or ideas to
GIPSA-Ideas@usda.gov; fax them to 202-690-2173; or
telephone them to 1-800-455-3447 or 202-720-7045.

It is best to send them via fax or email to reduce the possibility of transcription errors; however, ideas will be accepted regardless of the method of transmission.

PAGE 8 GIPSA news July 2015

Training and Merit Principles

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, D.C.



What training opportunities are available to me as an employee?

Why must training or development usually be related to my job for it to be approved?

Training and developmental opportunities for employee throughout the Federal government are **usually** directly related to their job to assist in improving their performance. Note, training not directly related to the job may consist of other types of activities if the purpose is to improve organizational performance. This may include Special Emphasis Program Management or resume writing or mentoring programs or other opportunities as identified by the agency or organization.

BELIEVE IT OR NOT: Merit Principles apply to training and that is why your training and development must be job related.

Taking training in a field outside your job position may result in a promotion or transition to another job series which requires that merit principles apply.

This means training that is unrelated to an employee's job must be announced to all other employees and then selection needs to be made competitively.

This is to ensure that one employee does not gain an advantage over another if there is a job opening in another field, because training may affect your rating in a job application when merit principles apply.

This policy is based 5 USC 410.

Note: that if there is a bonafide need for training to improve organizational performance, the agency may announce programs for competitive selection. An example would be a Leadership Development program for succession planning purposes.

So what is an employee to do?

- 1) First look within your job to identify skills or competencies that will help you perform better.
- You might look at common competencies that are needed in another position which are also required in another position.
- 3) Consider that there are core competencies identified by OPM which all employees may consider developing and these are:

Communication (Oral and Written), Continual Learning, Customer Service, Flexibility (Time Management), Integrity/Honesty, Interpersonal Skills, Problem Solving, Resilience, and Public Service Motivation.

Remember: Training is defined as:

5 U.S. Code Chapter 41 under 4101 which defines training as:

(4) "training" means the process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling the employee in, a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional, technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals;

This may be a limited form of development, so to expand your opportunities consider:

USDA directive on Individual Development Plan

https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/training/DR4040-410.pdf

PAGE 9 GIPSA news July 2015

Training from page 8.

According to the directive when developing an IDP, consider the following:

- 1. The matching of identified developmental needs with available developmental activities (training and non-training) is a major step in the IDP process.
- 2. A major difficulty supervisors and employees encounter in matching needs with activities is that of selecting the optimum developmental activity, which provides maximum learning within the boundaries of the organization's:
 - a. Mission.
 - b. Budget.
 - c. Workload.
 - d. Travel.
 - e. Staffing.
 - f. Time constraints.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WASHINGTON, D. C. 20250				
DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		Number:		
		4040-410		
SUBJECT: Creating Individual Development Plans (IDP)	DATE: February 7, 2011			
	ор: Office of Human Resources Management			
Section	Paş	ge		
1 Purpose	1			
2 References				
3 Background				
4 Special Instructions				
5 Policy				
6 Responsibilities				
Appendix A Guidance for Developing and Individual Development Plan (IDP) A-1		-		
Appendix B OPM Core Competencies		1		

- 3.To minimize this problem, a variety of developmental approaches and strategies should be considered. We often think of training only in terms of formal training courses. Actually there are four basic types of developmental experiences to consider in planning the IDP:
 - a. On-the-job-training.
 - b. Formal classroom training.
 - c. Self-development.
 - d. Developmental activities.
- 4. While all four types of experiences have their individual advantages and disadvantages, it is crucial to stress the importance of choosing the appropriate experience that most effectively and efficiently meets specific needs. Although it would be ideal to incorporate a combination of all four types, the resources available to the supervisor may not make this possible. That is why an open discussion between the employee and supervisor concerning all options is necessary to pinpoint what is feasible for approval.
 - a. **On-the-Job-Training.** Structured on-the-job-training is the most frequently used method of individualized learning. In this situation, the employee is counseled and coached while actually performing official duties. It usually involves individual instruction by the A-10 supervisor or a designated staff member because of his/her experience in the task or procedure to be learned. This approach can be used to teach employees new procedures, tasks and technology.
 - b. **Formal Classroom Training.** This training may take place away from your work site. Depending on the objectives, specific program and instructor's approach, this experience can be very valuable. It may be the only alternative you have to acquire specific or specialized technical or managerial competency.
 - c. Self-Development. When an employee aspires to a new career and his/her developmental needs cannot be directly related to present or anticipated work assignments, or resources are not available, the employee may undertake self-development activities:
 - (1) Taking evening or weekend courses at local schools.
 - (2) Watching educational or training videotapes.
 - (3) Using correspondence and other self-study courses.
 - (4) Reading books and other publications or journals.
 - (5) Using PC tutorials or computer assisted training programs.

PAGE 10 GIPSA news July 2015

Training from page 9.

Remember, what employees want in terms of development and what the supervisor can authorize may be different. The supervisor by law can only authorize certain types of activities on the job. To meet all goals, it may be necessary for the employee to gain some competencies on their own time. Funding should be discussed between the employee and the supervisor.

- d. **Developmental Activities.** One of the best ways to train for added responsibilities or higher job opportunities is through developmental activities. With the support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job. Examples of developmental activities include the following list:
 - (1) Shadowing: Providing the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the employee needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
 - (2) Detail/Rotational Assignments: Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
 - (3) Task Force Assignments: This is particularly effective if the employee has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) Response Rate

Linda Alston, Civil Rights

The final response rate report for the Federal Employee Viewpoint for GIPSA was **73.3%**, which is higher than our goal of 70% in 2014. The Office of personnel Management will scrub the data and provide us with a final response rate in August. After the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) cleans up the data the response rate may increase.



Thanks to everyone who responded to the data and we appreciate you taking time to do so.



A Shout-Out Goes to...

Thank you so very much for reaching out to me on this. This toolkit is extremely helpful and your Agency's veterans recruitment efforts are very much appreciated. Moriah in my office will be in touch with you and David soon to schedule a briefing opportunity for me to discuss the USDA Military Veterans portfolio.

Thanks, -KG

Karis T. Gutter Deputy Under Secretary Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services PAGE II GIPSA news July 2015

Equal Employment Advisory Committee Special Emphasis Program Managers

Andy Greenfield, EEOAC / Linda Alston, Civil Rights



Left to right: Mark Kemp, Desmond Coker, George Lewis, Jeana Harbison-Pasha, Valerie Collins, Dawn Cowan, Shoshana Avrishon, Marilynn Gallagher, Linda

The week of April 13th, representatives of the Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOAC) and Special Emphasis Program Managers (SEPM) met in Washington, D.C. The EEOAC and SEPMs are the eyes and ears of the agency, working to advise management on issues related to EEO, Civil Rights, Affirmative Action, and Workforce Diversity and Inclusion issues.

The EEOAC representatives provide advice and assistance to the Administrator or his designee on issues relating to EEO and Civil Rights impacting GIPSA.

Special Emphasis Programs were established to assist agencies in ensuring that EEO is present in all aspects of employment and that positive actions are being taken to address under representation. SEPM's provide advice and assistance to management officials in order to help them meet EEO program goals and objectives.

This is the first time the groups have met together face-to-face since July 2009. The groups met to assess how to make both groups more effective and proactive, address EEO issues from the Employment Engagement Team, and receive training from the

APHIS Civil Rights Staff, Office of the General Counsel, and OHRM Diversity & Inclusion Managers. At the end of the week, both groups briefed senior management on the week's activities. The Administrator tasked the EEOAC and SEPMs to look into the topics below:

- Find a way to get employees and managers to communicate with each other.
- Address the agency's policy on hiring panels to help improve the negative perception.
- How do we improve the perception that the agency is no longer a "good ole boy" network; with "good ole boy" in today's definition meaning inner circle or clique.

In case you do not know who the EEOAC members and SEPMs are:

EEOAC Members

Desmond Coker, P&SP, ERO Resident Agent Dawn Cowan, P&SP, CRS Marilynn Gallagher, P&SP WRO, Resident Agent Andy Greenfield, FGIS, FMD Susan McBryde, P&SP, Resident Agent Regina Ware, P&SP, LEAD Regina Willis, P&SP, ERO George Lewis, FGIS, Union Representative Cary Ainsworth, P&SP, Union Representative

Special Emphasis Managers

American Indian/Alaskan Native Program
Dawn Cowan, OA, CRS
Michael Meadows, P&SP, ERO

Asian American Pacific Islander Program Linda Alston, OA, CRS Black Employment Program Valerie Collins, FGIS, TSD Mark Kemp, OA, MBS

<u>Disability Employment Program</u> Jeana Harbison-Pasha, P&SP, LEAD

<u>Federal Women's Program</u> Jody Boydston-Johnson, P&SP, WRO Onetisha Anderson, P&SP, ERO

<u>Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Transgender Program</u>
Recently vacated. Questions about the program, please call Linda Alston on 202.720.1736.

<u>Hispanic Employment Program</u> Ana Trujillo, FGIS, League City John Rollins, P&SP, ERO

<u>Veteran's Employment Program</u> Shoshana Avrishon, P&SP, WRO Resident Agent PAGE 12 GIPSA news July 2015

Meeting with APHIS Debt Management

Ana Alvarado and Gail Mason, Washington, D.C.

On May 5 and 6, 2015, Ana Alvarado, and Gale Mason of the Packers and Stockyards Program, Litigation Economic and Analysis Program (LEAD) travelled to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to meet with the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Debt Management Team. Other contributors included representatives from APHIS, Investigation Enforcement Services (IES). The purpose and collaboration of the meeting was to review and discuss the current collection of GIPSA's civil penalties. The team also discussed the reporting, and management of debt, including delinquent debt owed to the Federal government. In conclusion the team came up with several solutions towards implementing better practices, and services for GIPSA's debt management process.



Front (L-R) Ana Alvarado (GIPSA LEAD), Lora Swanson (APHIS FOB), Teresa Lorenzano (APHIS IES), Lorna Harris (APHIS IES) Back (L-R) Melvin Copeland (APHIS FOB), Jennifer Elias (APHIS FOB), Jeremy Pouliot (APHIS FOB), Gale Mason (GIPSA LEAD)

Conversation with a Holocaust Survivor: Morris (Moniek) Rosen

Andrew Greenfield, EEO Advisory Committee, Washington D.C.

April may not be a nationally recognized Special Emphasis Program Month, but it happens to be National Holocaust Remembrance Month. On April 29th, several GIPSA employees, Administrator Larry Mitchell, Dr. Joe Leonard, USDA Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, and others attended the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's First Person Series: Conversations with Holocaust Survivors.

The program enables visitors to hear Holocaust survivors' stories in their own words, uniting personal experience with history in a way that is extraordinary in its intimacy and power

We had the pleasure of hearing Holocaust Survivor **Morris (Moniek) Rosen** be interviewed by journalist **Bill Benson**. Here is a brief synopsis of Morris' life during the Holocaust:



Morris (Moniek) a young man and today.

Born November 10, 1922, Morris grew up in Dabrowa Gornicza, an industrial town in western Poland. His father, Jacob, owned a general store, which he was forced to close in 1938 as a result of a boycott by anti-Semites. Morris attended both public and Jewish schools, and his father hoped he would one day become a rabbi.

1933-39: On September 1, 1939, Morris was awakened by the sounds of airplanes flying overhead as German forces invaded Poland. As the war drew closer, Morris fled eastward, but was caught near the Vistula River by advancing German troops. Returning to Dabrowa, he learned that the Nazis had killed some of the town's Jews, and had begun imposing severe restrictions on the community. Jews had to turn over radios, money, gold, silver, and furs, and were subject to forced labor. Morris worked for the German construction office as a carpenter and bricklayer.

1940-45: On August 12, 1942, German officials ordered Dabrowa's Jews to assemble in the town. Several thousand Jews, including Morris' parents, were selected for deportation. A few days later, they were transported to the **Auschwitz** killing center. Morris was later deported to a series of concentration camps. In February 1945, as the Soviet army approached, the Nazi SS "Protective Squadron" evacuated the **Kittlitztreben** camp. The prisoners, including Morris, were sent on a death march to the **Buchenwald** concentration camp, walking more than eight hours per day in the bitter cold. Morris survived another death march and was liberated from the **Theresienstadt** ghetto by Soviet troops. He reunited with members of his extended family. His parents and five of his nine siblings perished in the Holocaust.

In 1949, after spending several years in displaced persons camps in Austria and Germany, Morris immigrated to the United States. Morris volunteers today as a guest speaker because he feels he owes it to his fellow inmates who did not make it out of the Holocaust alive. He wants the world to remember them as well educate the public and future generations to ensure that tragedies like the Holocaust never happen again.

PAGE 13 GIPSA news July 2015

FGIS Gold Standard Award

As we heard during the Senate Ag Committee Hearing on May 5, 2015, the FGIS official inspection system is commonly referred to as the "Gold Standard." While all designated official agencies are part of this Gold Standard, FGIS believes it is important to recognize those achieving excellent performance. In that regard, on May 6, 2015, during the annual meeting for the American Association of Grain Inspection Agencies, FGIS had the distinct pleasure of recognizing five designated official agencies for their performance in providing official grain inspection and/or weighing services. Four of the designated official agencies were recognized for their excellent performance:

2015 FGIS Gold Standard Award Criteria:

- Designated state and private agencies;
- Received a quality management program review (QMP) between April 1, 2014-March 31, 2015;
- Received a 95% or higher QMP score;
- Had a SIMS Agreement Quotient of 90% or higher between April 1, 2014-March 31, 2015; and
- Is in good administrative standing with FGIS.

Ohio Valley Grain Inspection, Inc.

Ohio Valley received a 96% on their quality management review in March 2015 and had an overall SIMS agreement quotient of 90%. Ohio Valley is headquartered in Evansville, IN; has 19 employees licensed under the USGSA; and conducts approximately 28,000 inspections per year on mostly submitted and rail samples.

Tri-State Grain Inspection Service, Inc.

Tri-State received a 95% on their quality management review in October 2014 and had an overall SIMS agreement quotient of 92% from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015. Tri-State is headquartered in Cin-

cinnati, OH; has 15 employees licensed under the USGSA; and conducts approximately 3,000 inspections per year for mostly barges and submitted samples.

Lincoln Inspection Service, Inc.

Lincoln received a 96% on their quality management review in November 2014 and had an overall SIMS agreement quotient of 90%. Lincoln is headquartered in Lincoln, Nebraska; has 25 employees licensed under the USGSA; and conducts approximately 90,000 inspections per year on mostly submitted and rail samples.

Grain Inspection, Inc. (Jamestown)

Jamestown received a 96% on their quality management review in June 2014 and had an overall SIMS agreement quotient of 93%. Jamestown is headquartered in Jamestown, North Dakota; has 38 employees licensed under the USGSA and/or AMA; and conducts approximately 87,000 inspections per year on mostly rail samples.

The fifth designated official agency was recognized for outstanding performance, performing at the top of all eligible designated official agencies.

Kankakee Grain Inspection, Inc.

Kankakee received a 97% on their quality management review in April 2014 and had an overall SIMS agreement quotient of 96%. Kankakee is headquartered in Essex, Illinois; has 65 employees licensed under the USGSA and/or AMA; and conducts approximately 65,000 inspections per year on mostly container and rail samples.



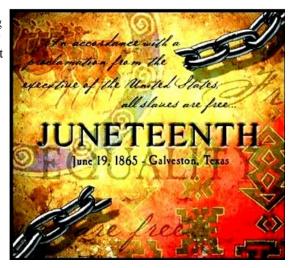
Recipients of the "GOLD STANDARD FOR GRAIN INSPECTION AND WEIGHING" Award AAGIWA / FGIS Annual Conference - Las Vegas, Nevada - May 5, 2015

PAGE 14 GIPSA news July 2015

History of Juneteenth

uneteenth is the oldest known celebration commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Dating back to 1865, it was on June 19th that the Union soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, landed at Galveston, Texas, with news that the war had ended and that the enslaved were now free. Note that this was two and a half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation - which had become official January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation had little impact on the Texans due to the minimal number of Union troops to enforce the new Executive Order. However, with the surrender of General Lee in April of 1865, and the arrival of General Granger's regiment, the forces were finally strong enough to influence and overcome the resistance.

Later attempts to explain this two and a half year delay in the receipt of this important news have yielded several versions that have been handed down through the years. One version is the story of a messenger who was murdered on his way to Texas with the news of freedom. Another, is the news was deliberately withheld by the enslavers to maintain the labor force on the plantations. Still another,



is that federal troops waited for the slave owners to reap the benefits of one last cotton harvest before going to Texas to enforce the Emancipation Proclamation. Either of the versions could or could not be true. For whatever the reasons, conditions in Texas remained status quo well beyond what was statutory.

The reactions to this profound news ranged from pure shock to immediate jubilation. While many lingered to learn of this new employer to employee relationship, many left before these offers were completely off the lips of their former 'masters' - attesting to the varying conditions on the plantations and the realization of freedom. Even with nowhere to go, many felt that leaving the plantation would be their first grasp of freedom. North was a logical destination and for many it represented true freedom, while the desire to reach family members in neighboring states drove the some into Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma. Settling into these new areas as free men and women brought on new realities and the challenges for black people in America. Recounting the memories of that great day in June of 1865 and its festivities would serve as motivation as well as a release from the growing pressures encountered in their new territory. The celebration of June 19th was coined "Juneteenth" and grew with more participation from descendants.

Juneteenth is now recognized as a state holiday or state holiday observance in 43 states and the District of Columbia.

On Juneteenth we come together young and old to listen, to learn and to refresh the drive to achieve. It is a day where we all take one step closer together - to better utilize the energy wasted on racism. Juneteenth is a day that we pray for peace and liberty for all."

Source: Juneteenth.com

What is Ramadan?

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. It is a time of fasting for the Islamic people. Each day during this month, Muslims all over the world abstain from eating, drinking, smoking, as well as participating in anything that is ill-natured or excessive; from dawn until the sun sets. Fasting is intended to educate the Muslim in spirituality, humility and patience. It is a time to cleanse the soul, focus attention on God, and put into practice selflessness. Ramadan is a time for Muslims to fast for the sake of God and to put forward more prayer than is customary



During Ramadan, Muslims request forgiveness for sins in the past, pray for direction and assistance in abstaining from everyday troubles, and endeavor to cleanse themselves through self-control and great acts of faith.

In comparison to the solar calendar, the Ramadan dates differ, moving forward approximately ten days every year due to the fact that it is a moving holiday which is dependent on the moon. Ramadan was the month in which the initial verses of the Qur'an were said to be shown to Muhammad, the Islamic Prophet. Ramadan begins **Thursday, June 18th**.

Source: whatisramadan.com

PAGE 15 GIPSA news July 2015

Raising Awareness: Transgender Rights

Kevin Smith, Washington, D.C.

The GIPSA Civil Rights staff is asking for your support as we embark on our journey to promote an environment free of all discrimination, where employees, our constituents and public have access to GIPSA's employment and programs. Current events often impacts our federal employees and creates dialogue in a workplace. Recently, in <u>Lusardi v. Department of the Army</u>, EEOC Appeal No. 0120133395 (April 1, 2015) (attached), the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a seminal appeal decision that found that the Department of the Army discriminated against a transgender employee by denying her access to a women's restroom. The Commission also determined that the Agency created a hostile work environment by allowing a supervisor to repeatedly and intentionally misuse the transgender employee's former name and male pronouns.



Tamara Lusardi is a veteran who works as a software Quality Assurance Specialist in Huntsville, Alabama. She began the process of transitioning in 2010, and, during the transition, the Army required her to use a single-user restroom, rather than the women's restroom. Ms. Lusardi was told that she would be permitted to use the women's restroom only after "proving" that she had undergone so-called "final surgery." On a few occasions during her transition, the single-user restroom was out of order, and so Ms. Lusardi chose to use the women's restroom. After each incident, she was confronted by a supervisor and told that she was making other employees feel "uncomfortable." She was again told she would have to use the single-user restroom until she underwent some type of final medical procedure.

Also during this time, a male supervisor repeatedly referred to Ms. Lusardi by her former male name, by male pronouns, and as "sir." The EEOC determined that this supervisor's use of the male names and pronouns were sufficiently severe or pervasive and were made for the purpose of humiliating and insulting Ms. Lusardi.

In reversing the Army's decision finding no discrimination with regard to Ms. Lusardi's allegations, the EEOC found that the Army had, in fact, discriminated against her by denying her access to the restroom associated with her gender. The Commission explained: "Nothing in Title VII makes any medical procedure a prerequisite for equal opportunity (for transgender individuals, or anyone else). An agency may not condition access to facilities – or to other terms, conditions, or privileges of employment – on the completion of certain medical steps that the agency itself has unilaterally determined will somehow prove the bona fides of the individual's gender identify." The Commission went on to conclude that "where, as here, a transgender female has notified her employer that she has begun living and working full-time as a woman, the agency must allow her access to the women's restrooms."

The Commission also found that the Army was liable for subjecting Ms. Lusardi to a hostile work environment, finding that the Army failed to stop the supervisor from intentionally and repeatedly referring to her by male names and pronouns, "intended to humiliate and ridicule" her. The EEOC ordered the Army to immediately grant Ms. Lusardi "equal and full access" to the women's restroom, to investigate and determine whether she was entitled to compensatory damages, to provide training on gender identify, sex discrimination, and retaliation to all civilian staff and supervisors in Ms. Lusardi's workplace.

In a recent interview related to this case, EEOC Commissioner Chai Feldblum noted that the "legal landscape is changing," so the most important thing agencies can do is provide training on LGBT issues as part of their initial orientation, as well as during EEO/civil rights and annual training. Commissioner Feldblum stated that federal employees have to understand the "simple point that when a person lives consistent with the gender he or she identifies with, he or she should be referred to using the correct pronoun and allowed to use the restroom consistent with that gender."

The Office of the General Counsel provides training on this issue and other matters related to civil rights, labor and employment law. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or are interested in any civil rights related training.

PAGE 16 GIPSA news July 2015

Letter from Bill Azmy on his Trip to Egypt

First of all, I would like to thank GIPSA, FGIS for all their help and complete cooperation in preparing checktesting samples for all the lab equipment to be used in 4 labs in Egypt to help standardize their equipment and bring it back to within FGIS tolerances. Also I would like to thank all involved at the BAR for the training samples I used there to train the Egyptian inspectors at the government Regional Center for Food and Feed (RCFF). I represented the U.S. Grains Council out of D.C. In 1992 they helped establish 4 grain Inspection Labs for the government of Egypt in 3 port cities and a central Lab in Cairo. I represented FGIS, at the time, to set up these labs and train their inspectors on Corn inspection.

Since 1992, the cooperation between FGIS, the USGC and the Egyptian RCFF continued in the form of sending their inspectors for training or using FGIS calibration samples for Checktesting.

This May, I took all the samples to Egypt to standardize their 4 labs' equipment. I was able to accomplish this mission and leave at the end these samples for them to store correctly and use in the next time they do their checks. Their labs all look like FGIS and they are ISO approved. This cooperation help them understand the U.S. Inspection system and minimize any grading problems as they are responsible for releasing the imported Corn cargoes from the vessels arriving at their ports.

On behalf of the US Grains Council in D.C., I would like to thank all that helped get this mission accomplished in FGIS, it would have never been done without your help. Special thank you goes to Ms. Mary Alonzo 's staff of the BAR, the Moisture lab and the equipment lab for their help and amazing cooperation.

Thank you,
Bill Azmy
BAR senior member, Retired
Grain Inspection Consultant, USGC



June is LGBT Pride Month

esbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month (LGBT Pride Month) is currently celebrated each year in the month of June to honor the 1969 Stonewall riots in Manhattan. The Stonewall riots were a tipping point for the Gay Liberation Movement in the United States. In the United States the last Sunday in June was initially celebrated as "Gay Pride Day," but the actual day was flexible. In major cities across the nation the "day" soon grew to encompass a month-long series of events. In June of 2000, Bill Clinton deemed the month of June, "Gay and Lesbi-



an Pride Month". Today, celebrations include pride parades, picnics, parties, workshops, symposia and concerts, and LGBT Pride Month events attract millions of participants around the world. Memorials are held during this month for those members of the community who have been lost to hate crimes or HIV/AIDS. The purpose of the commemorative month is to recognize the impact that lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals have had on history locally, nationally, and internationally.

In 1994, a coalition of education-based organizations in the United States designated October as LGBT History Month. In 1995, a resolution passed by the General Assembly of the National Education Association included LGBT History Month within a list of commemorative months.

LGBT History Month is also celebrated with annual month-long observances of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, along with the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. National Coming Out Day (October 11), as well as the first "March on Washington" in 1979, are commemorated in the LGBT community during LGBT History Month.

Source: Library of Congress

GIPSA news July 2015 PAGE 17

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report

Asian American & Pacific Islander heritage Month



May was Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month – a celebration of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States. A rather broad term, Asian-Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Easter Island).

Like most commemorative months, Asian-Pacific Heritage Month originated in a congressional bill. In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian-Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. Twelve years later, President George H.W. Bush signed an extension making the week-long celebration into a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was signed into law.

The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.

Due to scheduling conflicts the National Grain Center held its Asian-Pacific American Heritage celebration June 10th. Josh Liang organized the event. Ajit Gosh presented "What's in Their Mind," and Ganga Murthy and Mani Ramaswamy presented "Hinduism". Lunch was catered from Zwagat (an Indian restaurant).

Rice Industry Alliance Meeting



On May 20-21, 2015, Beverly Whalen, Cathy Brenner, Rick Dempster, Kent Lanclos and Tim Norden participated in the Rice Industry Alliance Meeting hosted by the University of Arkansas Rice Processing Program in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The Industry Alliance Meeting is a forum for the US rice industry and the Rice Processing Program to exchange information on basic and applied research to improve current rice processing operations and development of new products and processes. GIPSA personnel presented "Visual Rice Inspection Challenges," and also participated in a meeting to discuss the testing of arsenic in rice. Other participants included representatives from the rice industry, the USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and faculty of the University of Arkansas.

The rice industry is interested in the development of a commercially viable testing method for inorganic arsenic. GIPSA and ARS personnel discussed current method for testing for inorganic arsenic content, and some of the challenges associated with developing a more rapid and cost effective method. A potential development option was presented to the industry participants and feedback was sought regarding how well the prospective test could meet the needs of the industry in light of typical marketing channels and practices for rice and rice products. GIPSA will continue to work with ARS and the rice industry towards the development of commercially viable testing program for inorganic arsenic

PAGE 18 GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Missouri and Illinois to get a double whammy of noisy emerging Cicadas

They're ba-a-ack. Those noisy cicadas with their bright red eyes and dark bodies soon will emerge again in Missouri and Illinois after year's underground, poking holes in the soil starting in mid-May.

These periodical cicadas, which differ from the larger, greenish annual variety, aren't harmful to people and pose little threat to trees, which they can cover by the thousands.

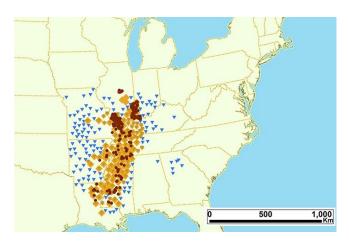
This year brings a cicada double whammy: both the 13-year and 17-year broods will come out in parts of Missouri and Illinois at around the same time. But luckily, they aren't expected to overlap. Kansas City and the western part of the state will see (and hear) the 17-year varieties, while southeast Missouri and southern Illinois will be visited by the 13-year species.



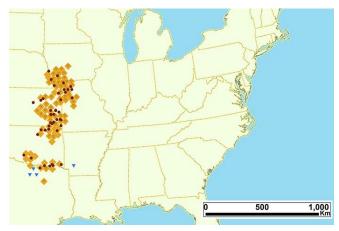


This will be the only time this century that two broods emerge in Missouri at the same time for a double dose of cicadas.

You may be thinking that you saw or heard some Cicadas last summer, and you probably did, but those were the Annual Cicadas also known as dog-day Cicadas. The Annual Cicadas are larger than Periodical Cicadas and they live underground for two to five years, but they appear every year because their broods overlap.



Brood IV (17 Year) The Kansan Brood



Brood XXIII (13 Year) The Lower Mississippi Valley Brood

PAGE 19 GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Severe Weather Training with Brain Busby

Brian Busby, KMBC's Chief Meteorologist, presented Severe Storm Training to the NGC staff on May 20th. Here is some information and tips on severe weather from the National Weather Service:

Tornadoes

A tornado is a violently rotating column of air extending from the base of a thunderstorm down to the ground. Tornadoes are capable of completely destroying well-made structures, uprooting trees and hurling objects through the air like deadly missiles. Tornadoes can occur at any time of day or night and at any time of the year. Although tornadoes are most common in the Central Plains and southeastern United States, they have been reported in all 50 states. This website is



designed to teach you how to stay safe in a tornado. If you know what to do before, during, and after a tornado you can increase your chances of survival. You'll also find links to research, past events and other topics of interest. Download NOAA's free Thunderstorms, Lightning and Tornado booklet for more information.

Severe Thunderstorms

A thunderstorm is considered severe if it produces hail at least 1 inch in diameter or has wind gusts of at least 58 miles per hour. Every thunderstorm produces lightning, which kills more people some years than tornadoes or hurricanes. Heavy rain from thunderstorms can cause flash flooding. High winds can damage homes and blow down trees and utility poles, causing widespread power outages. Every year people are killed or seriously injured because they didn't hear or ignored severe thunderstorms warnings. The information in this section, combined with timely watches and warnings about severe weather, could save your life.

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
- If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! Don't wait for rain. Lightning can strike out of a clear blue sky. Learn more about lightning safety.
- Avoid electrical equipment and corded telephones. Cordless phones, cell phones and other wireless handheld devices are safe to
 use.
- Keep away from windows.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends.
- If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground; water; tall, isolated trees; and metal objects such as fences or bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are NOT safe.

Lightning and Flood Threats

While much of the focus during severe weather is on tornadoes, wind and hail, there are actually more deaths caused each year by flooding and lightning, which are also commonly associated with severe weather. If you hear thunder or see lightning, head inside immediately! When Thunder Roars Go Indoors! Heavy rainfall from thunderstorms can quickly cause rivers and streams to overrun their banks and cause street flooding in cities. Remember, if you encounter a flooded roadway, do NOT drive or walk into it. Turn Around Don't Drown! Visit weather.gov/lightningsafety and weather.gov/floodsafety for more safety tips and information.

Are EEO/CR issues or concerns affecting your employment with GIPSA?

Do you have questions?

Need help?

Then let your voice be heard.

Call the Civil Rights Staff at (202)-690-3640



PAGE 20 GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Employee Spotlight: Jeremey Covington

Q: Where are you from?

A: I was born and raised in Columbus, Mississippi, a small town in northern Mississippi.

Q: Where did you attend school? What degree(s) do you have?

A: I went to an HBCU, Tennessee State University, where I received my Bachelors of Science with a concentration in Computer Science. I'm planning on receiving my Masters in the near future.

Q: What is the most interesting part of your job and/or what is your favorite part of your job?

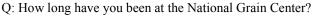
A: I like working with people. So, whether it's fixing something as small as an audio issue on someone's computer, or posting content to the website for someone, it's all a joy for me. I enjoy solving other people's issues.

Q: What is your position title and duties/responsibilities?

A: My official title is IT Specialist. Under this title I serve as the webmaster and also back up configuration manager for the application development branch.

As webmaster, I mostly manage the content that is displayed on our public website. As a configuration manager, I help manage the code and software utilities that we use in the Application Development Branch.

I also do some troubleshooting around the office for my fellow peers.



A: I was a summer intern here back in 2012 and 2013

I started working at NGC full-time on June 16th, 2014. Almost at the 1 year mark.

Q: What are your hobbies?

A: I love sports. Currently waiting for the NBA playoffs to unfold.

I also work out with co-workers daily and just joined the volleyball team that we have.

I'm also a music fanatic and enjoy creating small websites on the side.

Q: Who is the biggest influence in your life?

A: My mom is the biggest influence in my life currently. The thought of making her proud gets me through my rough days.

Q: What would you say is your greatest accomplishment?

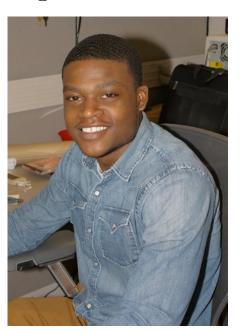
A: My greatest accomplishment thus far would have to be graduating college. Growing up in a city like mine, many people don't get the chance to move away and chase their dreams. I must've been an exception.

O: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: Weirdly enough, I always wanted to be a sports referee when I was younger. It was just something about the guy in the zebra suit and nice shiny whistle that interested me..... Then I realized referees don't make nearly as much as the actual players.

Q: What is your favorite band and song?

A: There's so many great musicians/songs in the world, it's hard to choose one as a favorite.



PAGE 2 I GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Chinese Delegation

A Chinese DDGS Delegation hosted by the Kansas Grain Sorghum Commission, Kansas Corn Commission and the Kansas Department of Agriculture toured the National Grain Center on May 14th.



Building Trust and Teamwork Workshops with Lauren Schieffer



Lauren Schieffer presented several Workshops on building Trust and Teamwork for the TSD staff on May 19th & 21st. PAGE 22 GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

AAGIWA Annual Meeting



The National Grain Center (NGC) was represented at the AAGIWA Annual Meeting by Mary Alonzo, Kent Lanclos, Eric Jabs, Tim Norden, Brian Adam, Pat McCluskey, Ron Metz, and Jeff L'Heureux.

Mary provided a brief review of 2014 and 2015 moisture appeals related to corn in the upper Midwest. Brian began with a review of the sorghum project to verify consistency of odor determinations among official agencies, the League City Field Office, and the BAR. Brian next discussed the BAR's review of a foreign complaint related to sorghum odor and damage. He then provided a brief discussion of 2015 BAR projects, and concluded with an update on BAR training for Official Agency and FGIS Quality Assurance Specialists.

Kent discussed changes to the approved equipment list and ongoing work related to the use of LED lighting in labs. Tim concluded the TSD presentation with an update on various topics, including the falling number monitoring program, mycotoxin test kit instructions and the revision of performance criteria, the DON inspection monitoring program, and possible changes regarding qualitative mycotoxin test kits.

Pat McCluskey provided a regulatory and standards update, which included an update on the fees for graded commodities and other proposed rules and grain standards. On the rulemaking side, he discussed the barley Final Rule, grain standards up for review this fiscal year, commodity inspection fees, and an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. He also discussed recent Handbooks, Program Directives, Program Notices, and Policy Bulletin Board notices released in the past year. Lastly, he updated the group on recent FGIS discussions with FDA about large animal filth and mycotoxin reporting requirements.

Ron Metz gave a brief introduction of DIOO personnel, which included some new and familiar faces as part of the expanded DIOO team at the National Grain Center.

Samantha Simon, Director, and Eric Jabs, Deputy Director, Quality Assurance and Compliance Division (QACD), presented "Gold Standard" awards to Official Service Providers (OSP's) who received the highest quality review scores over the last fiscal year.

PAGE 23 GIPSA news July 2015

The National Grain Center (NGC) Report (cont.)

Canadian Grain Commission Meeting





Left: CGC grain inspector training staff describe the Canadian inspector development training program to GIPSA staff.

Right: CGC Chief Inspector Randy Dennis; Pat McCluskey and CGC Chief Commissioner Elwin Hermanson after touring Canada's Grain Research Lab.

GIPSA representatives traveled to Winnipeg, Canada to conduct the second half of an informational exchange with the Canadian Grain Commission (CGC). Representatives of the CGC originally visited the National Grain Center in October, 2014, and met with their FGIS counterparts. Deputy Administrator Randall Jones; Deputy Director, Field Management Division Anthony Goodeman; Chief, Policy, Plans and Market Analysis Branch Pat McCluskey; Director, Technology and Science Division Mary CoffeyAlonzo; Board of Appeals and Review Chairman Brian Adam and Chief Scientist Tim Norden visited the CGC Grain Research Laboratory, the Canadian

International Grains Institute and the Canadian Malting Barley Technical Centre. CGC and FGIS will continue to explore opportunities for continued information sharing and collaboration.

Grand Forks Field Office Visit

Field Management Division's Deputy Director Anthony Goodeman and Technology and Science Division Director Mary Coffey Alonzo visited the Grand Forks Field Office on April 29. Here Agricultural Commodity Grader Larry Mosloff demonstrates lentil grading as Ed Stallman, Field Office Manager, Grand Forks Field Office and Tony look on.

QAS Seminar May 12-14



(Front Row): Tim Humiston, GSL; Kerry Camp, BAR; Lester Scott, Virginia Grain Inspection; Kyle Hankey, Kankakee Grain Inspection; Dempsey Lewis, BAR

(Back Row): Donald Damm, GSL; "Uncle" Jack M. Austin, Alabama Grain Inspection; Jack Wallace, Alabama Grain Inspection; Brock Schultz, Kankakee Grain Inspection; Cheyenne Mewes, Mid-Iowa Grain Inspection.

If you would like to make a contribution to "The National Grain Center (NGC) Report" please send information to Roger Friedrich, Leader, GIPSA, Digital Media Group roger.l.friedrich@usda.gov



PAGE 24 GIPSA news July 2015

FY2014 and FY2015 Employee Engagement Real Talk Sessions



Phase 1 of the Employee Engagement was a key goal for GIPSA in FY2014 which supported Secretary Vilsack's initiative. GIPSA set the goal to increase participation in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS). Facilitators were trained to be members of the FEVS Action Teams established in Headquarters and various field offices. The Facilitators delivered a yearly engagement regional action plan, through a series of quarterly "Real Talk" sessions"—with employees. These Real Talk sessions outline the successes, issues, goals and concerns of that organization's region, and identify initiatives to be focused on, addressing those key areas. The Real Talk session gave employees a place to share their thoughts and concerns regarding different aspects of GIPSA and their work unit.

The facilitators met with employees to discuss the following topics: Talent, Leadership and Knowledge Management, Performance Culture, and Job Satisfaction. Employees were also encouraged to provide solutions to the issues being discussed.

From these topics a template was created with the employees' responses. The template addressed the concerns and comments. A template with the topics was sent to senior management in Sep-

tember 2014 for their review and completion of the template. Ruth Ortiz, lead facilitator and Pat Ogunyale, Co-facilitator met with Senior Management in October 2014 to help fill out the template and to address topics that warrant special treatment. In April 2015 a final Employee Engagement report was submitted to the Senior Management Team. The Administrator addressed some of the concerns from the Real Talk sessions at the Town Hall meeting.

In Phase 2 Dexter Coburn, GIPSA, Civil Rights, Mediator, will be the lead on employee engagement and Pat Ogunyale will continue as the Co-facilitator. Moving forward, GIPSA's goal is to continue with the Real Talk sessions to allow employees a place to share their thoughts and concerns regarding different aspects of GIPSA and their work unit. Senior management will continue to address concerns from Phase 1 and any new concerns from Phase 2.

Employee Engagement lead met with Senior Management on May 28, 2015, to develop the action plan, in turn the employee facilitators will outbrief their respective team.

Issuance Report

FGIS Program Notice 15-01, Sample Collection Responsibilities for Verifying the Accuracy of Moisture Meter Calibrations Crop Year 2015, dated May 15, 2015

FGIS directive 9180.66, Zearalenone Testing, dated 11-04-10 has been canceled, new instructions have been released by TSD

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) (800) 222-0364 (888) 262-7848 (TTY) http://www.FOH4You.com

(888) 262-7848 (TTY)

http://www.FOH4You.com

Confidential toll-free number 24
hours a day/7 days a week





GIPSA news July 2015 PAGE 25

Training Updates

Caroline Thorpe, Washington, D.C.

Mandatory Training Due				
Course	Due Date	Trainees		
Civil Rights: No Fear Act Comprehensive	Within 30 days of hiring (USDA)	New Employees		
Cultural Transformation and Civil Rights: Harassment Prevention for Federal Employees Sexual Harassment Prevention for Federal Managers	September 30, 2015	All Employees and Managers		
Cultural Transformation: Maximizing Employee Engagement	September 30, 2015	All Supervisors, Managers, and Executives		
Cultural Transformation: Business of Coaching: Getting Ready to Coach	September 30, 2015	All Hiring Managers, Supervisors and SEPMs		
CyberSecurity: FY2015 Informational Security Awareness	March 31, 2015	All Employees (284 complete-441 incomplete)		
Ethics Training: To access see instructions below	June 30, 2015	All employees		

Click the Curriculum tab (circle) in the lower-right corner of your account

Click "2015 Annual Ethics Training"

Click the small triangle next to the "1 item from item pool"

Choose one of the training options which are:

Acquisition

Leadership

Classroom or Live Option: Only choose classroom training if you know you will be offered this option. The originator of the course will mark you complete (Usually the ethics office).

The Hatch Act (Recommended for all employees who do not do contracting or are not "official leaders")

LincPass Training:	December 15, 2014 (Past due)	All Employees w/computer access (164 employees are incomplete)	
Performance Training: Performance Management in USDA.	Due: May 15, 2015	All Employees whose Performance Training was incomplete for FY2014 due to technical issues.	
Safety-New Course: "Active Shooter: What You Can Do." (Either Web-based or PDF version)	April 30, 2015	All Employees	

Training and Development Tools in a Nutshell from USDA and GIPSA

If you're not in an organized development program, what options and tools do you have to move forward in your career? Below is a standard list of ongoing resources employees may use to identify career moves and make sure they take the next step.

- 1) Identifying next steps based on job series: Considering a move in your current government series or to another series. First look at your own Position Description and also find the series on OPM's website for the next grade higher. Carefully review the documents to clearly identify associated competencies and review this with someone in your office on what those skills are. For those in FGIS that do grain grading you may want go to the *In*GIPSA website at https://ingipsa.gipsa.usda.gov/training.aspx and under "steer your career" click on Career Information for ACGs, ACTs, and ACAs.
- 2) Goal Setting: Individual Development Plans (IDPs) Set developmental and training goals using your IDP and follow through.

PAGE 26 GIPSA news July 2015

Training from page 25

It is easy to identify activities but often the issue is executing or following- up on those plans. See if you can commit to a trusted friend to verify if you are following up on your developmental or training goals whether they are on your IDP (job related and organizational) or personal goals (financial, health, career or personal (house, family hobby). Further, the Department will be rolling out a coaching program over the next year. Initially this will probably be open to those in leadership training programs. Coaching, is a teaching, training or development process via which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional result or goal. As a result, the coach often asks a lot of questions to clarify next moves that help the coaches identify their next best moves. This is for usually a short duration less than six months. The object here is to meet to move forward with your goals, ideally to become a more engaged employee.

- 3) Mentoring: Some of you may participate formally and others may opt out of the formal process and do this informally (finding someone with the skills you want and simply talking with them). Either way, this is a great opportunity for you to get information on both the technical skills or soft skills or career development of an employee. Mentoring is defined as an individual who facilitates personal and professional growth by sharing knowledge and insights learned through the years. The assumption is that, unlike coaching, the mentor has some form of information or advice needed by the mentee.
- **4) Developmental Opportunities:** With support and assistance of the supervisor, the employee's present job can be restructured or arrangements made to have the employee temporarily transferred to another area to learn firsthand the necessary technical and managerial competencies required for effective performance in that job. Examples of developmental activities include the following list:
 - **Shadowing**: Providing a trainee or learner with the opportunity to observe a well qualified, journeyman level employee perform a particular skill. Immediately after the shadowing period, the learner needs to have the opportunity to perform the same skill and be given feedback on that performance.
 - **Detail/Rotational Assignments**: Short-term assignment particularly appropriate for important skills that make up a small portion of an individual's job, but can lead to full-time work in that field.
 - Task Force Assignments: This is particularly effective if the learner has an opportunity to work with well qualified people who will provide feedback to the learner on his/her performance and participation in the group.
- **5) Development of Job Aides**: Requires that the learner develop a product that will assist in the performance of the job, while, at the same time, serving as a vehicle for learning job-related information.
 - Cross-Program Assignments
 - Special Work Projects
 - Coaching Lower Level Employees
- **6) Finally, Communication, Communication, Communication:** Studies show that one skill clearly associated with job success and leadership is communication. Consider taking courses on AgLearn to strengthen both written and oral communication. If you want to enter leadership polish your briefing skills by joining Toastmasters, which is only about \$50 per year. See if you can find someone in your office who writes well and may be able to work with you on a basic writing program.

Many of these items are not new, but reviewing what is available now since you completed your IDP may be of value if you feel the need to adjust your activities throughout the year.

GIPSA News is the employee newsletter of the USDA Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration. Send your news, ideas, suggestions, comments, questions, or thoughts for the next issue to:

Jennifer S. Hill USDA, GIPSA, Stop 3620 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-3649 Phone (202) 690-3929 FAX (202) 690-3951 Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov By July 13, 2015



Retiring? To be included on our email distribution list after you retire from GIPSA, please send your email address to Jennifer.s.hill@usda.gov.